

## too late to realize by everybodyhatesjay

**Category:** Stranger Things (TV 2016)

**Genre:** Angst, Bad Boy Mike Wheeler, Break Up, Cheating, Eleven is a sweetheart, F/M, High School, High School AU, Implied/Referenced Cheating, Minor Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Multi, Strong Angst, read tags < 3

**Language:** English

**Characters:** Dustin Henderson, Eleven | Jane Hopper, Lucas Sinclair, Maxine "Max" Mayfield, Michael Wheeler, Mike Wheeler, Stacey Albright, Will Byers

**Relationships:** Eleven | Jane Hopper & Mike Wheeler, Eleven | Jane Hopper/Mike Wheeler, Stacey Albright/Mike Wheeler

**Status:** Completed

**Published:** 2021-07-01

**Updated:** 2021-07-01

**Packaged:** 2022-03-31 13:35:42

**Rating:** Mature

**Warnings:** Underage

**Chapters:** 1

**Words:** 1,585

**Publisher:** archiveofourown.org

**Summary:**

Jane Hopper and Michael Wheeler started their relationship at the age of 11. Michael left her for another girl at the age of 16.

Now with 17 years old, Jane understood. She was so glad to see Michael enjoying his life, even if it was with another girl. Even if he ditched his friend group to become a whole different person. She wanted him to be happy.

But Mike couldn't understand why she wasn't hurt.

That's why when he sees her at prom without a date, he questions everything he did.

## too late to realize

### Author's Note:

HEYY!! If anyone reads this, thank you. This is my first fic in english (english is not my native/first language) but im fluent tho so don't be scared to read. Still, excuse any grammatical mistakes :3

btw if u wanna get really into it just listen to "the night we met" while reading :D

Michael knew what was happening the moment he saw Jane entering the school gym.

"Mike.."

He couldn't stop staring at her slim figure. He felt completely enchanted by the sigh of Jane Hopper, his ex-girlfriend.

"Michael.."

Maybe it was her hair; her curls foamed luxuriously, or maybe the unique way that eyeshadow outlined the beautiful shape of her eyes. Maybe it was the cute but still bold dress that she was wearing..

"¡Michael!"

"Shit" Michael thought.

When he finally turned his gaze to the side, he found other pair of eyes. They were staring at him mysteriously, maybe trying to read him. There was a mix of sadness and anxiety in the eyes of his lovely girlfriend.

But Michael Wheeler didn't want to make his girlfriend cry. She was the most kindhearted human in the building, maybe even in the world. She'd stay until one in the morning waiting for Mike to finish his homework, just to have a little chat through the phone before going to bed. She'd do many things for him. So, so many.

He loved his girlfriend, for sure. He has been in love with her since the very first day.

"Sorry.." Mike answered, attempting to completely focus on Stacey.

Stacey, his beloved girlfriend. They partnered for an English project and ended up dating. In the first stages they simply smiled at each other in the hallway; then Michael started "accidentally" going to see her on Cheer practice, and depending on the day Stacey eventually invited him to the girls locker room..

But he was still with Jane. All that time.

"¿Are you okay?" Stacey batted her long eyelashes at Michael, and he nodded.

"Yeah, im fine"

Michael told Jane he was with another girl —maybe a little late. He knew Jane had a low capacity to understand everything around her, but of course she was acquainted with the word cheating (who isn't?). She understood what was happening.

Surprisingly enough to Michael and Stacey, Jane forgot about the situation. She clarified to him that she was completely and naturally happy about him and his new relationship; it was common sense. She grew up with Mike, why wouldn't her be happy for him?

Every single day Michael Wheeler watched as Jane Hopper walked down the hallway with a huge grin on her face. Glowing, like she have never done before. Jane Hopper didn't seem annoyed nor depressed by the break-up of her five year-relationship.

Six months have passed, and she is still glowing.

"¿Do you know where Lucas is?" Michael suddenly asked, with that anxious under-tone on his voice.

Stacey shook her head, intrigued, "I didn't know you guys were still friends"

"Oh, yeah, we are.." Mike chuckled as he took another sip of the

punch on his plastic cup. He wasn't lying though.

Lucas and Michael never fell apart. They kept hanging out in the Wheeler's basement and playing at the Arcade. Mike knew he could be himself when he was around Lucas. And as much Lucas hated this new version of Michael Wheeler, he appreciated the fact his all-life friend didn't forget about him.

"I don't know, but maybe you can ask them"

Mike watched as Stacey pointed a group of teenagers in the other side of the gym. The party.

"You know i don't talk to them" he defended himself. Mike hated when his girlfriend brought back his old times.

"It's just a question, not like you are gonna spend the rest of the night with them" Stacey shrugged. Maybe she was right.

Mike glanced at his old friend group. They were having a good time, absolutely. The four of them were talking and laughing loudly, sometimes standing up for a quick minute to dance. Michael also noticed how Will had a date, Dustin had a date, Max's date was probably Lucas, but..

Jane was alone.

He felt his heart sank at the view of Jane dancing alone; mouthing messily the lyrics while she jumped all around the big round table. How her dress rode up at every single bounce her body experienced, and how she placed her hands on her chest as she screamed the lyrics of a love song.

"Maybe i should ask. Lucas told me he needed something and i forgot" he added and observed his girlfriend having no problem with it. She simply nodded and grinned sweetly to her boyfriend.

He was about to take the first step when he heard the first notes of a slow song. He knew what was about to happen.

Every couple of students in the gym slowly moved to the center, ready to have the first slow dance of the night. He could feel the

atmosphere turning quieter and the lights tone changing to a deep red. This was his moment.

He looked over his shoulder, finding an eager Stacy. Everyone knew a lot of girls wanted to be in her position tonight.

He extended his hand, finally turning to face his date, "¿Wanna dance?" she didn't think about it twice, intertwining her hand with his and later being dragged to the dance floor.

And Michael obviously didn't notice, but there was someone observing them all the time.

Their bodies felt like one, rocking from side to side. For one single instance every thought about Jane vanished, because he couldn't think about her when he had someone like Stacey in front of him. He knew a lot of boys wanted to be in his position tonight.

Stacey's hair cascaded down her back, barely brushing Mike's hands. He stared into her eyes for the longest, his smile growing as the song kept going. His gaze trailed down to her rosy lips; he was going to kiss her.

It's not like they haven't done it before, because they definitely did; in the hallways, in the girl's locker room, in the basement.. everywhere. But this was different, more intimate. Michael was convinced this was the last thing he needed to utterly said he loved Stacey.

For some reason, his eyes fell on the girl sitting alone at the corner. Lying in the chair, playing with the curls falling near her forehead.. Jane Hopper.

This was supposed to be them.

Jane raised her gaze just to meet Mike's one. Michael could swear he saw tears slipping down her face.

He didn't expect to be this affected.

But there she was, the so-called love of his life. None of them could look away, they didn't want to either. Every second that passed felt like an eternity—even more for the girl in the chair.

Michael's breath hitched when he noticed Jane was picking her stuff and most likely deciding to leave.

"I have to go to the bathroom" Michael murmured capturing Stacey's attention. She arched her eyebrow and Mike continued, "im sorry.."

He let go of Stacey and started walking in the same direction Jane was going. The crowd was still accumulated in a certain part of the place, so it wasn't obvious that he was following her.

He didn't exactly want to apologize. He wanted to know if she was doing okay, if everything was fine.

Or maybe why she was alone..

"¡Jane!" Michael screamed when he saw the girl outside of the school. Jane was standing on the sidewalk, like she was waiting for someone.

When she turned around, Michael thought it couldn't have been worse. It wasn't okay that his heart was still pounding so hard and fast at the sight of his ex-girlfriend.

Her eyes were red, irritated. Her lips were swollen and his cheeks bright pink.

"¿What are you doing here?" Jane finally asked in a very low volume. She seemed so out of energy.

"I was just.." Mike swallowed roughly, trying to find the perfect words, "im just checking if you are fine.."

Jane lazily grinned down at him. Tears welled in her eyes again and Mike could feel his heart break piece by piece.

"Im fine, Mike. Don't worry about me, worry about the girl you are dancing with.." an elation expression appeared on her face, making it even more confusing for him.

"¿What do you mean?"

Jane approached him, walking slowly until they were face to face.

Less than three feet was the only obstacle between them and finally touching each other.

“We are not together. Everything that happens now is my business and not ours anymore, so don’t worry about it and go with Stacey..” even when Jane was clearly grinning, Michael could still watch the tears falling down on her face.

“Jane..”

“..Go before yours and Stacey’s business is not yours anymore” she finished. Michael heard the determination on her voice, but he wasn’t sure if it was the best idea.

Still, Michael couldn’t say anything.. ¿What was he supposed to say? He didn’t have the right to say anything, at all.

“I’ll miss you”

The sound of a car caught both of them off guard. Jane quickly noticed it was Hopper; he was waiting for her inside of the Jeep.

“I’ll miss you too, Mike” the girl leaned and planted a small kiss on Michael’s cheek, “I love you”

He loved her too, so fucking much,

“I love you too, Eleven”

Jane froze at the sound of that name. He hasn’t called her like that since they were 14.

But she didn’t care, because that was the exact same goodbye she needed before leaving Hawkins. She would always remember Mike and all the things she learned with him, including the most important;

Love.